

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This paper is in response to the Office Action dated January 25, 2007. Claims 1–14 are pending. Claims 1–4, 9, and 10–14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. 5,276,968 to Collins et al. (“Collins”). Claims 5–8, 10, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Collins. Applicant’s representative would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the recent interview conducted June 21, 2007. During this interview, the Examiner clarified that Claims 5–8, 10, and 11 were rejected as described above and not objected to as indicated in item 7 of the Office Action Summary.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action rejected Claims 1–4, 9, and 10–14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Collins.

As a preliminary matter, and not for reasons of patentability, Claim 1 has been amended herein to replace the word “indentation” with the word “recess.” Support for this minor clarification is included in the specification in several locations, including on page 14, lines 1–3. Furthermore, Claim 1 has been amended to recite a movable locking element rather than a moving element to be consistent with the claims that follow. Also, Claims 10 and 11 have been modified to show dependency from Claim 4 rather than Claim 1.

Independent Claim 1 discloses a cutting head for a brush cutter, edge trimmer or similar device that includes a passage for a cutter string **300** and a movable locking element **400** for locking the string **300**. *See, e.g.*, Fig. 9. The locking element **400** is suitable for locking the string between itself and a backing wall. The locking element has at least one recess **403** that extends transversely to the string such that contact is made between the locking element and the string at least on either side of the recess. *See* Figs. 11–13; page 14, lines 1–8.

Collins discloses a rotating head for cutting vegetation that includes a mechanism that extends the cutting line to a suitable operating length in certain situations. The head **29** has an aperture **38** through which the cutting line **31** extends into a cylindrical enclosed cavity **52**. Collins, Figs. 3 and 4; Col. 5, lines 26–38. The head **29** also includes two jaws **127**, **134** for

holding the cutting line 31. Figs. 4 and 5. Jaw 134, which is mounted on a lever 128, moves towards jaw 127, which is mounted on a base member 123, to pinch or engage the cutting line 31 and to hold it securely against extension. Col. 6, lines 22–48. Thus, jaw 134 is adapted to cooperate with jaw 127 such that the cutting line 31 is locked between the two jaws 127, 134.

The two jaws 127, 134 of Collins have a smooth outer wall for making contact with the cutting line 31. *See* Figs. 4 and 5. Collins does not disclose any recess on the outer wall of the jaws 127, 134, as required by Claim 1 of the present invention. Rather, it is the force F_2 provided by lever 128 and jaw 134 acting upon jaw 127 that serves to hold the cutting line 31 between the opposing smooth surfaces of the jaws 127, 134. In this way, the cutting line 31 is allowed to slide through the jaws 127, 134 and outward of the aperture 38 to increase the length of the cutting line when the line becomes shorter than a predetermined length. Fig. 4; Col. 6, lines 40–55. Also, a jaw by definition need not include an indentation or recess. Rather, a jaw is defined as “either of two or more opposable parts that open and close for holding or crushing something between them.” Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition, Definition 2b. In contrast, Claim 1 recites a locking element that includes at least one recess, with contact being made between the locking element and the string at least on either side of the recess.

Furthermore, Collins describes a second embodiment in Figs. 6–10 and accompanying text in which upper cam teeth 84 are in registered alignment with cam teeth 88. Annular concentric flanges 69, 71, included on a drum 60 that cooperates with the cam teeth, form an intervening cavity 77 for containment of a wound supply of coiled line. The cutting line 31 on the drum 60 extends through a peripheral hub cavity 89 for routing outwardly through aperture 38. However, there is no contact between the cam teeth 84, 88 and the cutting line 31. Thus, Collins does not disclose a locking element having at least one recess, with contact being made between the locking element and the string at least on either side of the recess, as required by Claim 1 of the present invention.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Collins does not anticipate the claimed invention.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks and amendments presented above, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 and all the claims depending therefrom (*i.e.*, Claims 2–14) are in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued in due course. The Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

The patentability of the independent claims has been argued as set forth above and thus Applicant will not take this opportunity to argue the merits of the rejection with regard to the dependent claims. However, Applicant does not concede that the dependent claims are not independently patentable and reserves the right to argue the patentability of the dependent claims at a later date if necessary.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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